



# NEWSLETTER

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF NORTH CAROLINA

No. 51

Chapel Hill, N. C.

October, 1963

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29th ANNUAL MEETING OF THE  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF NORTH CAROLINA

November 16, 1963

Greensboro Historical Museum  
220 Church Street  
Greensboro, N. C.

- 9:00 Registration
- 10:00 Opening--Mrs James F. McMillan, presiding.
- 10:30 "Palenque--A New Program of Research in Mexico" (Illustrated).  
Robert L. Rands, Assistant Director, Research Laboratories of  
Anthropology, University of North Carolina.
- 11:30 "Highway Salvage Program in North Carolina". Bennie C. Keel,  
Archaeologist, Office of State Archaeologist.
- 12:00 Lunch.
- 1:30 Business Meeting.
- 2:00 "Those Indians the Cowboys Meet on T.V." Mae W. Bell, Director,  
Rocky Mount Children's Museum.
- 2:30 "European Archaeology" (Illustrated). Mrs. James F. McMillan,  
President, Archaeological Society of North Carolina.
- 3:00 "Historic Site Archaeology in Coastal Carolina" (Illustrated).  
Stanley South, Archaeologist, Brunswick Town.
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## ARCHAEOLOGY ON KODIAK ISLAND

by  
Becky Sigmon

My first visit to the University of Wisconsin Anthropology Department yielded me an unexpected sight. All the skulls and postcranial bones spread out before me in the osteology laboratory were snow white. My first thought was that the preservative solution caused the bleached look since this most certainly was not the natural coloration of skeletal material to which I was accustomed. After further consideration, I realized that these Circumpolar and Arctic skeletons were, as the result of an environment of sun, salt, and exposure to the former two factors, naturally bleached. This was my first acquaintance with the Aleut-Eskimo skeletal types.

Closer examination of the skeletal material before me revealed other differences in comparison to the North Carolina-Virginia material with which I had worked. I then realized that I must learn to know these skeletal types so that I could sex, age, and race them, for in citing an example of a difference, a female skull here might be considered a male, had the skull been disinterred in North Carolina. The mandibles of these Arctic females appeared rather masculine like, I thought. This difference, among many others, I had to learn to detect before conducting study on Aleut-Eskimo skeletons.

Then I was presented with the opportunity of participating in archaeology field work on Kodiak Island. Realizing that the best knowledge of an area is by seeing and living in it, I eagerly accepted, and a week later found myself living in a tent, bedding down in a sleeping bag, eating food prepared on a Coleman burner, and washing in a saltwater lagoon. Kiavak Bay, located on the southeastern portion of Kodiak, was to be my home for six weeks.

On the site, my first day's most startling discovery concerned the soil coloration. All the soil layers were various hues of greys or blacks. Only the top soil, almost never more than 25 centimeters deep, and usually less, was brown. Slate and grey stones composed almost the whole rock findings. While still on the subject of soil color, I was also amazed at the beaches. My first thought when leaving the town of Kodiak by pontoon plane was what a vast amount of effort Kodiak Airways had gone to in order, for landing purposes, to cover the shores with large quantities of gravel. Later I discovered that every beach naturally has gravel

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\*Miss Sigmon, a member of the society, worked with one of the archaeological field crews in the Gaston Reservoir in 1962. She processed all of the skeletal material recovered during this project and used this information for her honors paper. This year she has a fellowship at the University of Wisconsin.

on it, and also that every beach is not composed of beige-brown sand as in southeastern U. S., but on the contrary consists of greyish gravel-colored sand.

My three main necessities, I had been informed, were warm clothes, raingear, and insect repellent. The fourth day at Kiavak I fully realized the value of these articles. For four days Kiavak was visited by a constant drizzle, swarms of "no-see-ums" (local term) or little biting flies, and chilly nights. Veiled in mosquito netting, and garbed in raingear, we continued trowelling and shovelling, hoping that in the gluey muck we were not overlooking artifacts. On the fifth day, the sun shone and the wind blew. Storing our raingear and mosquito nets, we walked much more lightly, in a physical and mental sense, to our site.

My first introduction to archaeology field work, which was the salvage project conducted on the Roanoke River Basin, employed accurate, although necessarily hasty procedures since the Basin was to have been flooded that same year. The Kodiak venture taught me the traditional archaeological trowel-and-shovel method. We excavated either by following natural soil levels, or by 25 cm. layers, whichever procedure appeared at the time more applicable. When the layer became dearth of or completely lacking in artifacts, which usually occurred only when we had reached sterile sand which might be more or less 200 cm., we proceeded measuring off another two by two meter square.

We excavated two sites at Kiavak Bay, designated Site 8 (probably the later site) and Site 20 (tentatively thought to have been of earlier inhabitation). The main trench for Site 8 extended 22 meters.

Two trenches approximately the same length as that of Site 8 were cut into the Site 20 mound, B trench designed to meet A trench at a right angle.

A North Carolinian, being accustomed to southeastern U.S. artifacts, can be quite surprised at what are designated "artifacts" in the Arctic. Instead of digging up cord-marked pottery, I found crudely constructed sherds with a temper of coarsely crushed rocks or slate. And instead of nicely constructed projectile points, I found bone harpoons, notched and grooved stones (which were difficult to distinguish from rocks at first--perhaps even more difficult to accept the fact that these crude stones could be artifacts), ulu blades, and stone lamp fragments.

As the weeks flew by, I became more adept at recognizing Arctic artifacts. By the time that I thought I was really getting the feel of Arctic excavating, the end of the summer had arrived. We moved the camp to Sitkalidak Island where I spent only a few days. Because of bad weather, the first few days were spent in surface collecting. While the others remained for another week, I, by necessity, left the beautiful Kodiak in order to meet my ride in Anchorage. After a week of driving down the Alaskan Highway and through Canada, I was abruptly jostled into the fact that I was once again in civilization, in Madison, and that graduate school lay only a short time before me.

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Notice of the Annual Meeting  
of the  
EASTERN STATES ARCHAEOLOGICAL FEDERATION

November 9-10, 1963

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

(Selected from the 20 talks scheduled)

"Mounds in Randolph County, West Virginia"  
by Bettye J. Broyles

"Loy: A Mississippian Site in East Tennessee"  
by Richard R. Polhemus

"An Early Prehistoric Iroquois Settlement Pattern"  
by Charles F. Hayes III

"New Electronic Techniques for Archaeology"  
by Froelich Rainey

"Fluted Projectile Points in a Stratified Site in Marshall County, Alabama"  
by David L. DeJarnette

"The Falling Creek Ironworks Site, Chesterfield County, Virginia"  
by Howard A. MacCord

Members of the North Carolina Society are urged to attend this very  
important meeting. The opportunity to hear such a program will not occur  
often.

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